



# Department of Justice

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## **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY WOMAN SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR IDENTITY THEFT**

Tampa, FL - U.S. Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich today sentenced Michelle Morton (age 39, of Hillsborough County) to ten years in federal prison for bank fraud and aggravated identity theft. The court also entered a money judgment for \$18,965.57, the amount of proceeds from the crimes. Morton had pleaded guilty on October 20, 2009.

According to court documents, Morton stole purses, wallets, checks, driver's licenses, and Social Security cards, the opened bank accounts in the names of her victims, deposited stolen checks into them, and obtained \$18,965.57. In addition, when arrested on State charges in connection with the thefts, Morton made false allegations against a State court judge in an effort to force the judge's recusal from her cases. Martin's prior record included more than forty prior Florida criminal convictions. As noted in open court, Morton's crimes involved several elderly victims, and several of her victims spoke at her sentencing regarding the havoc wrought in their lives as a result of her criminal conduct.

This case was investigated by the United States Secret Service and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas N. Palermo.

